



Idaho Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation

2015 - 2019

Content and Format

The Plan is divided into four sections. The first three sections describe the programs administered under the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR). Each of the programs described, Vocational Rehabilitation, Extended Employment Services, and the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, outline specific goals, objectives, performance measures and benchmarks for achieving their stated goals. The final section addresses external factors impacting IDVR.

Since Federal and Idaho State governments operate according to different fiscal years, and since IDVR is accountable to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on a federal year basis (October 1 – September 30), the agency will use federal year statistics for reporting the Vocational Rehabilitation program portion of IDVR. Any comparisons noted in benchmarks will reflect the most complete FFY data available. Since the Extended Employment Services and the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs are state funded only, all reporting will be based on a state fiscal year. This Plan will cover fiscal years (SFY) 2015 through 2019.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Vision Statement

“Your success at work means our work is a success.”

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Mission Statement

“Preparing individuals with disabilities for employment and community enrichment.”

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Goals

Goal #1 – To provide excellent and quality customer service to individuals with disabilities while they prepare to obtain, maintain, or regain competitive employment and long term supported employment.

1. **Objective:** To provide customers with effective job supports including adequate job training to increase employment stability and retention.

Performance Measure: To enhance the level of job preparedness services to all customers.

Benchmark: Increase the number of successful rehabilitations in FFY 2015 to meet or exceed FFY 2014 performance.

Benchmark: The average hourly wage of all successful rehabilitations in FFY 2015 will exceed FFY2014 year's average hourly wage.

Benchmark: Identify and provide workforce development opportunities for customers specifically in the area of "soft skills" development

2. **Objective:** To increase employment successes for transition age youth.

- A. **Performance Measure:** To work with Idaho school districts, Special Education Directors, and the State Board of Education to identify and assist transition age youth both internal and external to School-Work Transition projects.

Benchmark: The number of transition age youth exiting the IDVR program who achieved an employment outcome in FFY 2015 will exceed FFY 2014 performance.

Benchmark: The number of applications for transition aged youth entering the IDVR program in FFY 2015 will exceed FFY 2014 performance.

- B. **Performance Measure:** To provide increased work opportunities while in high school.

Benchmark: Evaluate potential mechanisms to support internships and mentorships for customers transitioning from high school.

3. **Objective:** To increase customer engagement in the VR process.

Performance Measure: Increase customer awareness of vocational information and the decision making process through informed choice.

Benchmark: The number of first time approved plans in FFY 2015 will exceed FFY2014.

Benchmark: The rehabilitation rate of individuals exiting the IDVR program in FFY 2015 will meet or exceed the Federal performance standard of 55.8%.

4. **Objective:** To offer benefit planning to all customers receiving SSI and/or SSDI entering, during and exiting the IDVR process to include Partnership Plus.

Performance Measure: To provide information and referral material to customers initiating and completing the IDVR program, specifically Partnership Plus and Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities.

Benchmark: Increase Social Security reimbursements to VR in FFY 2015 from FFY 2014 performance.

Benchmark: Increase the number of referrals to the WIPA program for benefits counseling in FFY 2015 from FFY 2014 referrals.

Goal #2 - To provide organizational excellence within the agency.

1. **Objective:** To increase the focus of customer service within the IDVR delivery system.

- A. **Performance Measure:** Provide all customers who have reached planned services, satisfaction surveys when exiting the IDVR program.

Benchmark: Maintain a customer satisfaction rate of at least 95% as demonstrated by “agree” to “strongly agree” ratings on customer surveys in FFY2015.

- B. **Performance Measure:** Provide all customers who have been determined eligible, satisfaction surveys at time of plan implementation or at closure if prior to plan implementation by the end of FFY 2015.

Benchmark: The customer satisfaction rate will demonstrate an overall “strongly agree” rating on customer surveys in FFY2015.

2. **Objective:** To comply with State and Federal regulations.

Performance Measure: Enhance the quality of a statewide program and evaluation system.

Benchmark: Demonstrate compliance with state and federal regulation through both internal and external audits with zero findings in FFY 2015.

3. **Objective:** Utilize training to its maximum capacity for effective staff performance.

- A. **Performance Measure:** Provide all IDVR staff training on policy and procedural changes throughout the agency.

Benchmark: Zero audit findings on State and Federal reviews in FFY 2015.

- B. **Performance Measure:** Provide all IDVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists training on how to communicate and develop effective relationships with employers.

Benchmark: Increase the number of successful rehabilitations in FFY 2015 to meet or exceed FFY 2014 performance.

4. **Objective:** IDVR will maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) standard for IDVR counselors.

Performance Measure: Evaluate and track annually IDVR counselors' maintenance of CSPD or progress toward achieving CSPD.

Benchmark: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will maintain all CSPD standards for their position annually. All Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist staff will continue to work toward and/or achieve CSPD in FFY 2015.

Goal #3 - To have strong relationship with our stakeholder and partners engaged in the mission of Vocational Rehabilitation.

1. **Objective:** For IDVR to be recognized as the expert in the workforce needs of the business community for individuals with disabilities.

A. **Performance Measure:** To develop a Business Relations position.

Benchmark: Implement a Business Relations position in FFY 2015 that will be a resource to employers statewide.

B. **Performance Measure:** To enhance a business network with employers to include involvement with the Idaho Association of Business and Industry, the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and human resource organizations.

Benchmark: Increase the number of different occupational areas hiring IDVR customers in FFY 2015 from FFY 2014.

C. **Performance Measure:** To enhance relationships with the Regional Business Specialist from the Department of Labor.

Benchmark: Increase the number of different occupational areas hiring IDVR customers in FFY 2015 from FFY 2014.

2. **Objective:** To have an outcome based payment system of services with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP).

Performance Measure: Evaluate and develop a milestone process.

Benchmark: Implementation of a milestone program for CRPs by the end of FFY 2015.

3. **Objective:** Provide ongoing opportunities to stakeholders and partners for effective input and feedback in the IDVR process.

Performance Measure: Enhance the number of stakeholders and partners meeting to improve communication and understanding of each programs' system.

Benchmark: Increase the number of applicants entering the IDVR process in FFY 2015 from FFY 2014 performance outcome.

4. **Objective:** Provide information to partners and stakeholders regarding the VR process and comprehensive referral information when applicable.

Performance Measure: Enhance the delivery system of VR general information and referral-specific information to partners and stakeholders.

Benchmark: Increase the number of applicants entering the IDVR process in FFY 2015 from FFY 2014 performance outcome.

Benchmark: Increase the number of successful rehabilitations in FFY 2015 to meet or exceed FFY 2014 performance.

Extended Employment Services

Mission

Idahoans with significant disabilities are some of the state's most vulnerable citizens. The Extended Employment Services (EES) Program provides people with significant disabilities employment opportunities either in a community supported or workshop setting.

Vision

Provide meaningful employment opportunities to enable Idaho's Most Severely Disabled to seek, train-for and retain real work success.

Goal #1 – Continually improve the quality and quantity of Extended Employment with Vocational Rehabilitation Services available to eligible Idahoans with severe physical and mental disabilities and to assist them to prepare for, obtain or regain gainful employment opportunities.

1. **Objective:** Develop and emphasize customer centered programs offering increased choice, flexibility and opportunities for meaningful employment.

Performance Measure: Increase the availability of customer centered employment services through employment, training, and job opportunities funded through the Vocational Rehabilitation Extended Employment Services.

Benchmark: Five percent reduction in program waitlisted customers.

Benchmark: Increase customer choice.

Benchmark: Transparency in customer centered allocations.

Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH)

Role of IDVR

CDHH is an independent agency. This is a flow-through council for budgetary and administrative support purposes only with no direct programmatic implication for IDVR. The following is the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Strategic Plan.

Mission

Dedicated to making Idaho a place where persons, of all ages, who are deaf or hard of hearing have an equal opportunity to participate fully as active, productive and independent citizens.

Vision

To ensure that individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing impaired have a centralized location to obtain resources and information about services available.

Goal #1 – Work to increase access to employment, educational and social-interaction opportunities for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

1. **Objective:** Continue to provide information and resources.

Performance Measure: Track when information and resources are given to consumers.

Benchmark: Create and maintain brochures and other information about employment, education and social-interaction.

Goal #2 – Increase the awareness of the needs of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing through educational and informational programs.

1. **Objective:** Continue to increase the awareness.

Performance Measure: Give presentations to various groups through education and social media.

Benchmark: Present to various organizations including corrections, courts, schools, and businesses about the needs of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Goal #3 – Encourage consultation and cooperation among departments, agencies, and institutions serving the deaf and hard of hearing.

1. *Objective:* Continue encouraging consultation and cooperation.

Performance Measure: Track when departments, agencies, and institutions are cooperating (such as Department of Corrections and Health and Welfare.)

Benchmark: Present to various agencies about the need for cooperation providing services needed for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Goal #4 – Provide a network through which all state and federal programs dealing with the deaf and hard of hearing individuals can be channeled.

1. *Objective:* The Council's office will provide the network.

Performance Measure: Track when information is provided.

Benchmark: The Council will continue to maintain a network through their website, brochures, telephone calls, video phone calls and personal communication.

Goal #5 – Determine the extent and availability of services to the deaf and hard of hearing, determine the need for further services and make recommendations to government officials to insure that the needs of deaf and hard of hearing citizens are best served.

1. *Objective:* The Council will determine the availability of services available.

Performance Measure: The Council will facilitate meetings to determine the needs.

Benchmark: The Council facilitated a Mental Health Task Force to determine the needs for mental health services for the deaf and hard of hearing. The Council facilitated town hall style meetings throughout the state to determine the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals throughout the state.

Benchmark: The Council will facilitate an Interpreter License Task Force to determine the need for legislation to regulate the practice of interpreting on behalf of consumers who are hearing, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech disabled by licensing and provisionally licensing the providers of sign language interpreting services and establishing and monitoring sign language interpreting standards in the State.

Goal #6 – To coordinate, advocate for, and recommend the development of public policies and programs that provide full and equal opportunity and accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing persons in Idaho.

1. **Objective:** The Council will make available copies of policies concerning deaf and hard of hearing issues.

Performance Measure: Materials that are distributed about public policies.

Benchmark: The Executive Director of the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will facilitate meetings with different agencies including Health and Welfare, Corrections, schools and businesses to create public policy, including Interpreter standards.

Goal #7 – To monitor consumer protection issues that involves the deaf and hard of hearing in the state of Idaho.

1. **Objective:** The Council will be the “go to” agency for resolving complaints from deaf and hard of hearing consumers concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Performance Measure: Track how many complaints are received regarding the ADA.

Benchmark: The Council will provide information and create brochures regarding all aspects of the ADA that affect persons with hearing loss.

Goal #8 – Submit periodic reports to the Governor, the legislature, and departments of state government on how current federal and state programs, rules, regulations, and legislation affect services to persons with hearing loss.

1. **Objective:** The Council will submit reports.

Performance Measure: Reports will be accurate and detailed.

Benchmark: The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will create a periodic report to provide to the Governor’s office. The Council will present a needs assessment report to certain departments/agencies as needed.

External Factors Impacting IDVR

The field of Vocational Rehabilitation is dynamic due to the nature and demographics of the customers served and the variety of disabilities addressed. Challenges facing the Division include:

Adequate Supply of Qualified Personnel

IDVR is dedicated to providing the most qualified personnel to address the needs of the customers they serve. Challenges in recruitment have been prevalent over the past several years. Recruiting efforts have been stifled by low wages as compared to other Idaho state agencies as well as neighboring states. IDVR has identified the need to develop relationships with universities specifically offering a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Furthermore, IDVR has identified universities offering coursework for other degree programs that will meet eligibility for the Certification in Rehabilitation Counseling (CRC). Lastly, IDVR has collaborated with the University of Idaho to advance the profession of rehabilitation counseling.

State and Federal Economic and Political Climate

While Idaho has seen some improvement in its economic growth over the past year there are a variety of influences which can affect progress. Influences can vary from natural disasters to international conflicts. Individuals with disabilities have historically experienced much higher unemployment rates, even in strong economic times. Furthermore, Idaho has the highest percentage per capita of worker in the country making minimum wage. IDVR recognizes this and strives to develop relationships within both the private and public sectors in an effort to increase employment opportunities and livable wages for its customers.

The political elements are by far the most difficult for IDVR to overcome. At the state level, the Division is subject to legislative action regarding annual budget requests including service dollars and personnel expansion. Any legislation pertaining to service provision either by public or private sectors will have a definite impact on Division services and service providers.

IDVR is also affected by decisions made at the federal level. The outcome of the new Affordable Care Act is not yet clearly understood, but will undoubtedly have an influence on IDVR customers and services provided. Also, the direction Congress chooses regarding reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act will impact the future of Vocational Rehabilitation in Idaho. Federal funding decisions, e.g., training grants, block grants, funding reductions, program deletions, merging of programs, changes in health care and employment standards and practices are areas that would impact the Division's planning process. Funding decisions and allocations on a state level have a direct impact on the amount of federal dollars the agency is able to capture.

Funding reductions on both the State and Federal level have and will continue to impact partnerships and comparable benefits available to the IDVR. For example, reduced budgets to school districts have impacted collaborative agreements. These agreements have allowed the IDVR to use nonfederal funds to match federal dollars, therefore increasing the amount of dollars available to IDVR. It is uncertain at this time the full impact in which sequestration will have on

the IDVR, partners and programs. It is anticipated that some programs in which comparable benefits are available will be reduced or eliminated, therefore increasing the economic impact to IDVR on the delivery of vocational services.

Adequate Availability of Services

Due to the rural nature of Idaho, there are isolated pockets of the state with limited vendor option. This can directly impact customer informed choice. Furthermore, a vendor's inability to meet required credentialing under IDAPA will significantly reduce or eliminate a customer's options. Lastly, changes to other program criteria will eliminate services to customers. A change in Health and Welfare's criteria for the HCBS Medicaid Waiver is one example affecting program services.

Technological Advances in Both Assistive Rehabilitation Products and Information Technology

IDVR recognizes the importance of both information and assistive technology advances as intricate to the success of the division as well as the customers it serves. The cost and rapid changes in these technologies influence the overall program success. IDVR is dedicated to keeping current of the latest trends in both assistive rehabilitation technology and information technology, and in training Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and staff. IDVR employs an Information Technology staff to develop innovative ways to utilize technology in carrying out its mission. IDVR also collaborates with the Idaho Assistive Technology Project through the University of Idaho with center locations throughout the state.

All staff of the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation takes pride in providing the most effective, efficient services available to individuals with disabilities seeking employment. Management is committed to continued service to the people of Idaho. The goals and objectives outlined in the IDVR Strategic Plan are designed to maximize the provision of services to Idahoans with disabilities as well as promote program accountability.